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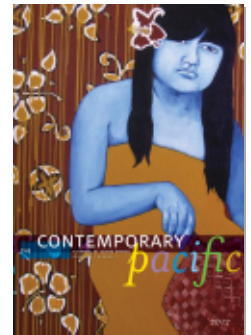
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Maori Times, Maori Places: Prophetic Histories (review)

Meijl, Toon van.

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 17, Number 2, Fall 2005, pp. 468-470
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that they were sending out pastors and evangelists to communicate it to neighboring groups.

The rapid religious change in Urapmin society calls for explanation and to elucidate it, Robbins turns to analyses of change in the work of Marshall Sahlins (*Islands of History*, 1985; "The Economics of Develop-Man in the Pacific," *Res* [Spring 1992] 21, 13–25), as well as Louis Dumont and others. Drawing on Sahlins's work, Robbins identifies three models of change: "assimilation"; "transformation" or "transformative reproduction"; and "adoption," in which people take on a new culture on its own terms without trying to integrate it with preexisting cultural categories. "Adoption" is what Robbins sees happening in Urapmin Christianity. The Urapmin, he says, have adopted Christianity, but they have not yet integrated it into their way of life. Thus, he writes, "what is most distinctive about the Urapmin case from the point of view of cultural theory is the way people there are guided by two cultural systems that have in many ways remained distinct and between which exist many contradictions that have yet to be smoothed out through successful processes of synthesis" (327). As *Becoming Sinners* narrates with empathy and insight the religious struggles in one community, it paves the way for further cultural studies on ways of becoming Christian in the Pacific and makes a significant contribution to the study of culture change.

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Maori Times, Maori Places: Prophetic Histories, by Karen Sinclair. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. ISBN cloth, 0-7425-1638-5; paper, 0-7425-1639-3; xii + 272 pages, tables, figures, appendixes, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$75.00; paper, US\$28.95.

This book is the result of long-term field research among the followers of a Christian Māori movement in the Whanganui region on the North Island of New Zealand. They refer to themselves as the Māramatanga movement, meaning literally "lightness" or "clarity," while also evoking the connotation of lucidity or discernment. The contemporary Māramatanga movement shares its name with the following of Mere Rikiriki, the famous prophetess of Parewanui, who was responsible for introducing the New Testament into Māori beliefs at the beginning of the twentieth century. In addition, she is known as the aunt of Wiremu Rātana, who was seen as "mouthpiece" or mediator for Jehovah and became nationally recognized as Māori prophet and founder of a movement that is politically highly influential until today.

Mere Rikiriki was mainly active as a faith healer. On her death she passed her gifts and talents on to Hori Enoka Mareikura, under whose auspices she also requested that her *rā wairua* (commemorative celebration day) be observed. As visionary, seer, and healer, Mareikura became acknowledged head of the Māramatanga movement during the second decade of the twentieth century. Mareikura and his following saw Māramatanga as distinct from the Rātana move-

ment, since he focused mainly on spiritual activities such as the removal of tapu from sacred places, while Rātana became more involved in political activities such as the struggle for the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The current movement finds its origin in the death of Mareikura's granddaughter, Lena Ruka, who died suddenly at the age of sixteen in 1935. After her body had been laid in the coffin she began to communicate to her family. Her wairua (spirit) initially addressed the mourners through her mother's body, but in the course of time she has channeled her messages also through other persons. Lena's soul or spiritual essence has continued to contact and guide her extended family over the past seventy years, during which she became known as Te Karere o Te Aroha, or "The Messenger of Love." Te Karere has offered her family, their relations, and friends guidance from the transcendent world by conveying knowledge and inspiration in the form of messages, epigrams, chants, songs, and dreams. This enduring and growing corpus of knowledge has caused the members of the Māramatanga movement to believe that they are guided and guarded by spiritual forces. The privilege of direct communication with the supernatural world has reassured them time and again that they are being offered succor by forces that supersede the human in a changing and often disconcerting world.

This book offers a detailed ethno-historical account of the development of the Māramatanga movement against the background of the colonization of New Zealand and the reli-

gious influence of the Catholic mission. The focus is mainly on genealogical relationships among the adherents of the movement in the context of a regional history of the Whanganui district. In addition, the author elaborates at great length on memorable events in the history of the movement, such as an ascent of Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand's largest volcano, which marked the transfer of leadership across generations in 1962. The mission to the mountain was like a pilgrimage, which culminated in the placement of a painting of *Our Lady of Perpetual Succour* at the summit, thus contesting government control over resources that Māori treasure as part of their natural and cultural heritage. The mission to the mountain also involved an interesting inversion of a well-known Catholic symbol, which Māori now consider as a source of strength and sustenance that will lead to Māori rather than European redemption.

Other case studies in this book record the Māramatanga tradition of pilgrimages to Waitangi, where in 1840 a treaty was signed between the British colonizers and a number of Māori chiefs, and the mission undertaken by elders of the movement to repatriate the remains of an ancestor deported in the 1840s to a prison camp on an island off Tasmania. Finally, the author pays attention to the recent tradition of canoe trips down the Whanganui River blending the Māramatanga with the wider network of tribes in the region and with Catholicism, which has characterized the population of the river district since the end of the nineteenth century.

Interspersed between the chapters making up this book are narratives about the death of Lena Kura in 1935 and the life histories of six key figures in the movement. These people all acted as channels for Te Karere's messages and were also committed to the movement and its aim of maintaining a Māori identity in a European world. In the narratives of their lives the continuing strength and vitality of Māori knowledge and ritual is demonstrated, which illustrates that sometimes biography and history may reinforce each other: history is encompassed in biography, while biography in this case is characterized by a battle against dramatic cultural changes.

The narratives included in this book are extremely detailed accounts of the lives of individuals and their perspectives on the significance of the Māramatanga movement over time. The fact that they make up almost a third of the entire book must be understood in light of the fact that the author was more or less requested by the leaders of the movement to write this book some time after she had completed her doctoral dissertation. She spent considerable time with the movement over the years and was given full access to the notebooks containing messages from Te Karere, and records of chants, speeches, songs, and significant events in the history of the movement. This background may also explain the documentary character of the book, which in my view is primarily of interest for New Zealand specialists. The author does situate her account of the movement within contemporary debates about colonial history, postcolonial identity, and the interplay between religion and politics in counter-colonial discourses, but

these debates only mark the contours of the ethnohistorical analysis. Ethnographically, it is interesting that the book has been written in the third person, which makes one wonder whether the author has capitalized on her ethnographic experiences. The appeal of the book could perhaps have been enriched by a little more attention to the personal experience of the meaning of the Māramatanga movement in the lives of the people with whom the author became so close. However, these remarks are not intended to detract from the author's remarkable achievement in producing a valuable book for and about a group of people who have lived mostly in isolation and were therefore largely unknown in the wider world.

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Cargo, Cult, and Culture Critique, edited by Holger Jebens. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. ISBN cloth, 0-8248-2814-3; paper, 0-8248-2851-8; vii + 294 pages, table, figures, map, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$55.00; paper, US\$20.00.

The chapters in this volume are revised versions of papers presented at a workshop in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1999. Ethnographically, Melanesia, especially Papua New Guinea, receives the most attention, but chapters also focus on Indonesia, Fiji, and Australia. The critiques advanced or discussed in the volume are of several kinds: critiques of the term "cargo cult"; discussions of the phenomena